



Grants Technical Assistance

Intermediate Request for Proposal:

HECC #23-130

OregonBuys #S-52500-00009258

Date of Issue: 01/31/2024

Review of Workforce Ready Grant Assistance Proposals begins on 02/14/2024

Closing Date for HECC Grant Assistance Proposals: 06/30/2024 at 1:00 PM

Single Point of Contact ("SPC"):

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(971) 372-1133

1. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The State of Oregon, acting by and through its Higher Education Coordinating Commission (“HECC”) is issuing this Request for Proposals (“RFP”) to engage contractors who are skilled in providing technical assistance in grant application writing in response to solicitations issued by HECC, called Requests for Applications (“RFAs”), and submission processes to potential grant applicants. All Contractors submitting responses to this RFP are referred to as “Proposers” in the RFP. After execution of contracts, the successful Proposers will be designated as “Contractors.” The pool of Contractors initially selected will first assist HECC’s Future Ready Oregon grant applicants specifically, and that same pool or subsequent pools of Contractors may mutually be decided upon to assist grant applicants to subsequent RFAs issued by HECC. Resulting contracts may only be for the duration for assisting potential applicants as described in the paragraph below (“Initial Need: Future Ready Oregon”) or for up to five years, as funding and the payment limitation described below allows.

The not-to-exceed amount for all contracts issued under this RFP is \$250,000. The hourly rate for services will not exceed \$165.00. HECC reserves the right to amend any contract awarded under this RFP for time or money as it determines in its best interest.

Initial Need, Future Ready Oregon: [Future Ready Oregon](#), also known as Senate Bill (“SB”) 1545 (2022)(subsequently incorporated into statute as Chapter 28, Oregon Laws 2022), is a comprehensive \$200 million investment package that supports the education and training Oregonians need to obtain good-paying jobs and long-term careers. These Grants will be issued through **three separate Request for Applications (“RFA”) processes** which may overlap in timing and will be available to workforce service providers and community-based organizations that administer workforce programs in the healthcare, manufacturing, and technology industry sectors. The Grants will prioritize equitable program participation by individuals from priority populations. The RFAs will be specific to one of the three industry sectors, and there will be a minimum of one RFA per industry sector. Contracts will cover two periods of work related to each of the sector-specific rounds of Applications under the Workforce Ready Project. The first period of work will start upon execution of the contract(s) resulting from this RFP and will run the duration of time that the Workforce Ready Grant RFAs are open to the public, which is anticipated to span approximately 80-90 days for each Workforce Ready Grant RFA. The second period of work will begin approximately two months after the first and will last another 60 days in support of applicants that were not selected to receive funding, by providing guidance and feedback for consideration for future application opportunities. The total feedback period could last up to 120 days.

HECC Grant Programs: Following the Workforce Ready period, Technical Assistance Providers (“TAPs”) will then be made available to the offices of HECC who may be requesting grant applications for a wide range of grant programs, which include providing funds to Oregon’s network of colleges, universities, workforce development initiatives, pre-college outreach programs, and youth development programs.

2. SCOPE OF WORK

HECC is seeking one or more contractors to provide technical assistance to potential grant applicants in the completion and submission of their applications to Workforce Ready job sector-specific grants, and subsequently, to HECC's agency-wide RFAs.

HECC will refer potential applicants to the TAPs awarded contracts under these RFAs in a fair and equitable manner as it determines in its sole discretion. Activities include but are not limited to:

- Being available and responsive to requests from potential applicants for any or all RFA processes.
- Assisting potential applicants in determining if they are eligible to apply.
- Assisting potential applicants in understanding the RFA application process and the resources available to them.
- Providing guidance and clarification on the requirements of the RFAs.
- Providing guidance and feedback on applicants' draft submission materials including their application, project plan, program budget, and certification sheet.
- Sharing best practices of grant application writing to assist potential applicants in submitting strong applications.
- Providing guidance and feedback to applicants who were not selected for a grant award to prepare them for future grant opportunities.

3. STATEMENT OF WORK

Contractors will perform the following for each round of RFAs:

- Attend one or more introductory and training meetings with HECC to understand the separate RFAs and desired outcomes. Dates, times, and location (including virtual) will be mutually agreed upon.
- Attend check-in and follow-up meetings with HECC staff.
- Consult with HECC when unsure of the appropriate response to potential applicants.
- Attend (in person or virtually) and participate in information sessions as designated by your Contract Administrator for potential applicants.
- Provide HECC with a clear process and availability for potential applicants to use when accessing this service.
- Respond to requests and inquiries from HECC within two business days.
- Respond to requests and inquiries from potential applicants within two business days.
- Send potential applicants a HECC-hosted survey to collect feedback on their TAP experiences with the RFAs within a week of end of consultation.
- Track the work completed and submit a final report that details the following:

- The number of assistance inquiries received.
- The unique number of potential applicants/organizations that accessed the service, including organization names.
- The type of assistance that was provided.
- The number of hours spent directly consulting and communicating with potential applicants.
- The number of hours spent completing activities that did not involve direct work with potential applicants.
- A narrative on specific supports or resources provided to potential applicants that were culturally and linguistically responsive.
- A narrative on applicant feedback regarding the RFA and award processes.
- A narrative on lessons learned and recommendations for future RFA processes where TAPs will be made available to potential applicants.

4. REQUIRED ATTRIBUTES

Successful Proposers will demonstrate the following required attributes:

- A commitment to delivering services in a fair, just and equitable manner in alignment with the [HECC Equity Lens](#).
- An understanding that by contracting for these services, your organization and its employees will not be allowed to compete for sector-specific Workforce Ready Grants funding.
- Availability to meet with potential applicants.
- Prior experience providing contract or grant writing technical assistance to grant applicants, especially for competitive opportunities like Requests for Proposals for contracting opportunities or Requests for Applications for grants opportunities.

Desired attributes are:

- The ability to offer services in languages other than English, or in varying accessibility formats.
- Prior experience working with culturally specific organizations.
- Prior experience with or knowledge of workforce development systems and services and/or higher education.
- Prior experience providing contract or grant writing technical assistance to community-based organizations, especially for competitive opportunities like Requests for Proposals for contracting opportunities or Requests for Applications for grants opportunities.

5. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

If you are interested in this opportunity, **you must submit a Letter of Interest (“LOI”) to HECC at jeanie.stuntzner@hecc.oregon.gov by the dates listed below. LOIs submitted through OregonBuys will NOT be accepted.**

HECC will begin reviewing all submitted LOIs on **February 14, 2024** for consideration for the pool of TAPs for Future Ready’s imminently issued RFAs. Thereafter, HECC will review LOIs on a rolling basis at intervals of its discretion (e.g. monthly or quarterly) for consideration that HECC determines would benefit subsequent RFAs and RFPs from a pool of TAPs. This RFP will not close until June 30, 2025. Proposers that wish to be considered as a TAP for Future Ready’s imminently issued RFAs AND subsequent RFAs and RFPs from any program within HECC should state that desire in their proposal.

The LOI must be no more than 5 pages, and must address all of the following:

- Your prior experience providing technical assistance to others for this type or writing grants for state and/or federal grant opportunities.
- Your plan and capacity to complete the activities described in Section 3, and any additional activities you will perform.
- How you meet the attributes listed in the Required Attributes section.
- Which attributes from the Desired Attributes section you possess.

After an initial evaluation session, HECC may ask leading Proposers for interviews.

If you have questions related to this solicitation, contact the SPC listed on Page 1. HECC, in its sole discretion, may extend the LOI due date. HECC may reject all LOIs or cancel this RFP in its sole determination, it is in the best interest of HECC.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

LOIs meeting the requirements outlined in Section 6 will be reviewed by an Evaluation Committee. Evaluators will award points for the criteria listed below, with number of points awarded commensurate with the clarity and thoroughness of Proposer’s response to the Evaluation Items.

- **Evaluation Item 1: Experience and capacity (50 points)**
 - How well has the Proposer demonstrated experience and/or capability to perform the services described in Section 3 – Proposed Statement of Work? (20 points maximum)
 - How well does the Proposer demonstrate they have the capacity to successfully provide the services described in this solicitation document in the timeframe required by HECC? (20 points maximum)
 - How well does the Proposer demonstrate their experience with culturally and/or linguistically specific supports to clients? (10 points)
- **Evaluation Item 2: Project Approach (30 points)**

- How well does the Proposer clearly and concisely describe their intended approach to performing the services described in Section 4? (10 points maximum)
 - How well does the Project Approach demonstrate an understanding of the Project requirements? (5 points maximum)
 - Does the Proposer offer any new or enhanced ideas to add value to the services requested in this RFP? (5 points maximum)
 - How well does the Proposer articulate support of culturally and/or linguistically diverse clients with their approach to technical assistance for this project? Does Proposer's Project Approach further diversity, equity, and inclusion in support of HECC's Equity Lens? (10 points maximum)
- **Evaluation Item 3: Registration with the Certification Office for Business Inclusion and Diversity (COBID) (20 points)**
 - Vendor is an active and registered [COBID](#) firm (not pending/applied status)

SPC may request further clarification to assist the Evaluation Committee in gaining additional understanding of Proposals. A response to a clarification request must be to clarify or explain portions of the already submitted Proposal and may not contain new information not included in the original Proposal.

The top Proposer(s) awarded the most points will be selected to enter into contract negotiations with HECC. HECC reserves the right to interview Proposers prior to selection.

7. SUCCESSFUL PROPOSER REQUIREMENTS

A. Insurance

Prior to execution of any contracts, the successful Proposers shall secure and demonstrate to HECC proof of commercial general liability insurance coverage in the amounts of \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$2,000,000 aggregate, unless otherwise negotiated. Policies can usually be obtained for short-term durations for relatively low cost—please consult an insurance broker if you do not already carry the above-described insurance.

B. Taxpayer Identification Number

The apparent successful Proposer shall provide its Taxpayer Identification Number on a completed W-9 form (which can be found here: <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf>). The apparent successful Proposer must provide its backup withholding status on the W-9 form if either of the following applies:

- When requested by HECC (normally in an intent to award notice), or
- When the backup withholding status or any other information of Proposer has changed since the last submitted W-9 form, if any.

HECC will not make any payment until HECC has a properly completed W-9.

C. U.S. Government System for Award Management Registration

For Workforce Ready Grant Technical Assistance Providers: Proposer is registered with the U.S. Government System for Award Management ([SAM.gov](https://sam.gov)) and is not on the disbarred list. Proposer and Proposer’s employees, agents, and subcontractors are not included on:

- the “Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons” list maintained by the Office of Foreign Assets Control of the United States Department of the Treasury found at: <https://www.treasury.gov/ofac/downloads/sdnlist.pdf>, or
- the government-wide exclusions lists in the System for Award Management found at: <https://www.sam.gov/SAM>

D. Business Registry

If selected for awards, Proposers, shall be duly authorized by the State of Oregon to transact business in the State of Oregon before executing any contracts. The selected Proposer shall submit a current Oregon Secretary of State Business Registry number, or an explanation if not applicable.

All Corporations and other business entities (domestic and foreign) must have a Registered Agent in Oregon. See requirements and exceptions regarding Registered Agents. For more information, see Oregon Business Guide, How to Start a Business in Oregon and Laws and Rules. The titles in this subsection are available at the following Internet site: <http://www.filinginoregon.com/index.htm>.

8. LIMITATIONS

Contractor will not share publicly any information about applicants or grantees and their respective grant applications, and will not respond to any public or media requests for information. Contractor will direct all inquiries or information requests outside of a Customer’s own materials to the Contract Administrator

9. PUBLIC RECORDS

All information and records submitted to HECC are subject to disclosure under the Public Records Law, ORS 192.311 to 192.478. If Proposer believes that any information or records it submits to HECC may be a trade secret under ORS 192.345(2), or otherwise is exempt from disclosure under the Oregon Public Records Law, Proposer must identify such information with particularity and include the following statement:

“This data is exempt from disclosure under the Oregon Public Records Law pursuant to ORS chapter 192, and is not to be disclosed except in accordance with the Oregon Public Records Law, ORS 192.311 through 192.478.”

If Proposer fails to identify with particularity the portions of such information that Proposer believes are exempt from disclosure, Proposer is deemed to waive any future claim of non- disclosure of that information.

10. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

A. Governing Laws

This RFP is governed by the laws of the State of Oregon. Venue for any administrative or judicial action relating to this RFP, evaluation and award is the Circuit Court of Marion County for the State of Oregon; provided, however, if a proceeding must be brought in a federal forum, then it must be brought and conducted solely and exclusively within the United States District Court for the District of Oregon. In no event shall this Section be construed as a waiver by the State of Oregon of any form of defense or immunity, whether sovereign immunity, governmental immunity, immunity based on the Eleventh Amendment to the Constitution of the United States or otherwise, to or from any Claim or from the jurisdiction of any court.

B. Ownership

All Proposals submitted in response to this RFP become the Property of HECC. By submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, Proposer grants the State a non-exclusive, perpetual, irrevocable, royalty-free, fully paid-up, worldwide license for the rights to copy, distribute, display, prepare derivative works of and transmit the Proposal solely for the purpose of evaluating the Proposal, negotiating an Agreement, if awarded to Proposer, or as otherwise needed to administer the RFP process, and to fulfill obligations under Oregon Public Records Law (ORS 192.311 through 192.478). Proposals, including supporting materials, will not be returned to Proposer unless the Proposal is submitted late.

C. Cost of Submitting Material

Proposer shall pay all the costs in submitting its Proposal, including, but not limited to, the costs to prepare and submit the Proposal, costs of samples and other supporting materials, or costs to participate in demonstrations.

D. Statewide E-waste

If applicable, Proposer shall include information in its Proposal that demonstrates compliance with the Statewide E-Waste/Recovery Procedure 107-011-050_PR. Download the procedure by visiting www.oregon.gov/DAS, then enter the procedure number into the search bar, and find the procedure in the search results window.

E. Recyclable Products

Proposer shall use recyclable products to the maximum extent economically feasible in the performance of the Services or Work set forth in this document and the subsequent

Contract. (ORS 279B.025)

F. Printing, Binding Work

Except as provided in ORS 282.210(2), all printing, binding and stationery work, including the manufacture of motor vehicle registration plates and plates required to be affixed to motor carriers, for the State or any county, city, town, port district,

school district, or other political subdivision, must be performed within the State of Oregon.

ATTACHMENT A — PROPOSAL CERTIFICATION SHEET

Legal Name of Proposer: _____

Address: _____

State of Incorporation: _____ **EntityType:** _____

Contact Name: _____ **Phone #:** _____ **Email:** _____

Any individual signing below hereby certifies they are an authorized representative of Proposer and that:

1. If awarded a Contract, Proposer agrees to perform the scope of work and meet the performance standards set forth in the final negotiated scope of work of the resulting Contract.
2. I have knowledge regarding Proposer’s payment of taxes and by signing below I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, Proposer is not in violation of any tax laws of the state or a political subdivision of the state, including, without limitation, ORS 305.620 and ORS chapters 316, 317 and 318.
3. Proposer does not discriminate in its employment practices with regard to race, creed, age, religious affiliation, gender, disability, sexual orientation, national origin. When awarding subcontracts, Proposer does not discriminate against any business certified under ORS 200.055 as a disadvantaged business enterprise, a minority-owned business, a woman-owned business, a business that a service-disabled veteran owns or an emerging small business. If applicable, Proposer has, or will have prior to contract execution, a written policy and practice, that meets the requirements described in ORS 279A.112, of preventing sexual harassment, sexual assault and discrimination against employees who are members of a protected class. HECC may not enter into a contract with an anticipated contract price of \$150,000 or more with a Proposer that does not certify it has such a policy and practice. See <https://www.oregon.gov/DAS/Procurement/Pages/hb3060.aspx> for additional information and sample policy template.
4. Proposer is registered with the U.S. Government System for Award Management (SAM.gov)
5. Proposer and Proposer’s employees, agents, and subcontractors are not included on:
 - A. the “Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons” list maintained by the Office of Foreign Assets Control of the United States Department of the Treasury found at: <https://www.treasury.gov/ofac/downloads/sdnlist.pdf>, or
 - B. the government-wide exclusions lists in the System for Award Management found at: <https://www.sam.gov/SAM>
6. Proposer certifies that, to the best of its knowledge, there exists no actual or potential conflict between the business or economic interests of Proposer, its employees, or its agents, on the one hand, and the business or economic interests of the State, on the other hand, arising out of, or relating in any way to, the subject matter of the RFP. If any changes occur with respect to Proposer’s status regarding conflict of interest, Proposer shall promptly notify the State in writing.

Proposer certifies that all contents of the Proposal (including any other forms or documentation, if required under this RFP) and this Proposal Certification Sheet are truthful and accurate and have been prepared independently from all other Proposers, and without collusion, fraud, or other dishonesty.

7. Proposer understands that any statement or representation it makes, in response to this RFP, if determined to be false or fraudulent, a misrepresentation, or inaccurate because of the omission of material information could result in a "claim" (as defined by the Oregon False Claims Act, ORS 180.750(1)), made under Contract being a "false claim" (ORS 180.750(2)) subject to the Oregon False Claims Act, ORS 180.750 to 180.785, and to any liabilities or penalties associated with the making of a false claim under that Act.
8. Proposer certifies it will comply with the Pay Equity law, ORS 652.220, if applicable.
9. Proposer is registered in the State's electronic procurement system, OregonBuys, found here: <https://oregonbuys.gov/bso/>. (Registration is free by clicking the blue "Register" button on the top right corner of the webpage.)

Authorized Signature

Date

(Printed Name and Title)